

Skalvians

The **Scalovians** (Lithuanian: *Skalviai*; German: *Schalauer*), also known as the **Skalvians**, *Schalwen* and *Schalmen*, were a Baltic tribe related to the Prussians. According to the *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* of Peter of Dusburg, the now extinct Scalovians inhabited the land of Scalovia south of the Curonians and Samogitians, by the lower Neman River ca. 1240.



The Skalvians in the context of the other Baltic tribes, circa 1200 CE. The Eastern Balts are shown in brown hues while the Western Balts are shown in green. The boundaries are approximate.

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Geography

This region is located at both sides of the river Memel north of Nadruvians and south of Samogitia. In the North-East it stretched to rivers Šešupė, Ežeruona and Jūra. In the East it bordered on Sudovia, in the North-West on river Minija, in the West on the Curonian Lagoon and in the South-West on river Gilija. The center were the towns of Rusnė, Ragainė and Tilžė.

Name

The meaning is uncertain: *skalwa* "splinter (living split off)" or *skalauti* "between waters". According to Prussian legends, the tribe's name is derived from one of the sons of King Widewuto named Schalaubo.

History

The inhabitants can be traced back to burial grounds with cremated remains and occasional graves of horses. Judging from the diggings, Scalovians are assumed to have been related to other Western Balts such as Curonians and more distantly to Prussians. Typical Scalovian sepulchral relics are found in Strewa, Skomanten, Jurgaiten, Nikeln, Paulaiten, Wilku Kampas, Weszaiten, Greyszönen, Lompönen and Wittgirren.

The center of Scalovia was the castle of Ragnit. Peter von Dusburg told about a wooden castle which could not be conquered by force or starvation because the inhabitants of the stronghold had put in an artificial lake, stocked with fish. The conquerors had to burn down the castle.

In 1276–1277, Scalovia was subjugated by the Teutonic Knights. In the chronicles of the Knights were mentioned the nobles Sarecka (Sareikā), Surbantas, Svirdotas and Surdota. In 1281, Jondele Schalwithe got the first "Landesprivileg," and in 1289 the castle of order Ragnit was built. Between 1281 and 1383,

privileges were made out: 1338 in *Plekischken* near Plaschken, 1312 and 1333 near *Sasavo* in the region between Laugßargen and *Tauragė*, 1307 in *Sintine* near Tilsit, 1307 *Gigen* (near present-day *Pagėgiai*), 1309 *Linkone*, 1350 *Linkonen* (*Linkuhnen*) as well as *Weinoten* near Tilsit, *Tusseinen* near Ragnit and *Linkuhnen*. Lithuanian immigrants were *Sipe* (1339) and the brothers *Pogins* and *Skirgaila* (1359). In 1411, a campaign of the Samogitians under their leader Rumbaudas Valimantaitis against the castles of Ragnit, Tilsit and Splitter is testified.

The last mention of the Scalovians was between 1542 (inhabitants of the castle of Ragnit) and 1563 (inhabitants of Splitter).

Language

Skalvian, or Scalovian, is the presumed West Baltic language or dialect of the Skalvians.^[1]

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Skalvian	
Scalovian	
Region	Lithuania, Kaliningrad
Era	13th century
Language family	Indo-European <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Balto-Slavic ▪ Western Baltic ? ▪ Skalvian
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	svx
Linguist List	svx (http://multitree.org/codes/svx)
Glottolog	None

References

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